

16 rededication ceremony with county historian George Ross as the guest speaker told of the great history behind this community asset.

Credit should go to the dedicated members, Dale Nollman, and Carpenter's for Christ for their assistance in the rebuilding process. They not only restored the church, but also brought the building up to standards including making it wheelchair accessible.

I am truly pleased to see that the Mt. Moriah Christian Church's efforts will keep this part of community history living with new chapters to come well in to the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, due to a commitment to my family on Wednesday, June 9, 1999, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall Nos. 182-184.

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address an issue of great importance to me and to many members of the community I represent. Fair and equal access to capital and credit should be a fundamental right, yet for too long it has been a privilege based on race or economic class. The dream of owning your own home or business slips away when financial institutions discriminate against hardworking, creditworthy Americans.

Fortunately, blatant discrimination in the lending industry is in decline, home ownership and small business opportunities are on the rise and we can attribute much of this progress to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). CRA rates federal banking agencies on how they meet the credit and capital needs of all the communities in which they are chartered and from which they take deposits. Community organizations, elected and religious leaders, and ordinary citizens have a right to offer their opinions regarding the CRA performance of lenders during CRA exams or mergers of CRA. Additionally, CRA has leveraged a tremendous amount of reinvestment for our nation's inner cities and rural areas. For example, in 1997, low- and moderate-income borrowers received 28 percent of the nation's mortgage loans—up dramatically from 18 percent in 1990. According to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, banks have made over \$1 trillion in commitments to CRA-related loans and investments since the law was passed in 1977. In Rhode Island, CRA has revitalized cities throughout the state. From Constitution Hill in Woonsocket to the West End of Providence to Newport, community based housing and economic development activities are taking place because of CRA.

As we here in the Congress consider financial modernization and H.R. 10, I will strenuously oppose any effort to weaken CRA. In addition, we must strengthen our nation's reinvestment and fair lending laws through reopening requirements on policyholders. We should ensure that CRA will leverage new business opportunities by helping insurance companies, community organizations, and local public agencies identify missed market opportunities in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

I urge my colleagues to stand firm in support of CRA during the debate on H.R. 10. Supporting the measurable progress we have made in expanding economic opportunities for all segments of our society is the right thing to do.

RHODE ISLAND COMMUNITY

REINVESTMENT ASSOCIATION,

Providence, RI, May 24, 1999.

Hon. ROBERT WEYGAND,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATRICK KENNEDY,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WEYGAND AND CONGRESSMAN KENNEDY: The RI Community Reinvestment Association (RICRA) is a thirteen-year-old organization working to encourage the public and private reinvestment in the housing and community economic development of low and moderate neighborhoods in the state. RICRA provides foreclosure prevention advocacy for individual homeowners.

The future of CRA is at risk. Given the importance of the Fleet proposed acquisition of BankBoston with 50 bank branches to be sold. One example, the City of Pawtucket has on the table all Fleet and BankBoston branches to be sold. CRA is revitalizing our cities in Rhode Island. From Constitution Hill in Woonsocket to the West End of Providence to Newport and South County, community-based housing and economic development activities are taking place because of CRA. CRA must be preserved. Financial Modernization should benefit all segments of our communities and individual households. Financial Modernization should not be just for depositors with daily balances in the six-figures income. Financial Modernization must include community reinvestment.

RICRA is requesting that as our Congressional Delegation in the House of Representatives that you join the procession for a one-minute statement on CRA. We've enclosed the text for your consideration. If you agree to do a one-minute speech, please work with Rep. LaFalce's staff (Tricia Haisten 202-225-4247).

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of working to save CRA.

Sincerely,

RAY NEIRINCKX,
Coordinator.

EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES FOR 30% DISABLED VETERANS

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support allowing veterans with a service-con-

nected disability of 30% or more to use military exchanges. I am pleased that the House Armed Service Committee approved report language urging the Pentagon, in coordination with the Veterans Administration, to study the feasibility of providing exchange privileges to veterans with a disability of 30% or more. I want to reiterate my support for this policy, and I hope that the Pentagon will favorably report back the results of their study to the Armed Services Committees in both the House and Senate before the end of this year.

Today, as many as one million disabled and deserving veterans are unjustly denied the ability to patronize military exchanges. Exchange privileges are granted to veterans who incur a serious disability while in service that warrants medical retirement, but veterans whose disabilities increase after separation from military service are denied this privilege.

I support extending exchange privileges to disabled veterans whose service-related injuries exacerbate over time. Many veterans who incurred service-connected injuries that did not appear initially to be serious enough to warrant medical retirement, but these injuries often have a delayed effect and develop later in life into more severe disabilities that significantly impair their health.

The Department of Defense can afford to give exchange privileges to veterans with service-connected injuries which have led to a disability of 30% or more. I do not believe that allowing these deserving veterans exchange privileges will greatly burden exchange operations or the appropriated funds budget. Already, employees of the military exchange systems, who have never served a day in uniform, enjoy exchange shopping privileges. Disabled veterans deserve no less.

We should grant exchange privileges to this group of patriots because it is the right, fair and honorable thing to do. I am pleased that the bill we are considering today urges the Pentagon to correct this injustice.

RECOGNIZING WCXO IN CLINTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to congratulate WCXO in Clinton County which will begin broadcasting in mid-June from a state-of-the-art FM facility.

This station will not only provide music entertainment: it will also give a valuable resource to local residents by its commitment to the community through its broadcasting of boys' and girls' high school sporting events, local and headline news reports, and farm reports.

Owned by Joy Publishing, the station will be headed by General Manager Annette Bevel. Under her guidance and their dedicated staff composed mostly of Clinton County's own, I am confident that the station will be a great asset to Clinton County.

I applaud these efforts to improve communication, entertainment, and information within Clinton County and wish them well.